

edward johnson building
faculty of music
university of toronto



FACULTY ARTISTS SERIES

PROGRAM I

WALTER HALL

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1980

8 P.M.

NEXT CONCERT: U. of T. Symphony Orchestra, October 18, 8 pm
MacMillan Theatre

NEXT FACULTY ARTISTS CONCERT: November 1, 1980, 8 pm
Walter Hall

PROGRAM

Scherzo for Violin and Piano in C minor

JOHANNES BRAHMS

DAVID ZAFER, violin; PATRICIA PARR, piano

The Scherzo in C minor is one of Brahms' earliest surviving compositions. It was the 20-year-old composer's contribution to the famous F.A.E. ("Frei aber einsam") Sonata dedicated to the violinist Joseph Joachim. The Sonata's first movement was composed by Albert Dietrich, and the second and fourth by Robert Schumann. It was first performed by Joachim with Clara Schumann at the piano on October 27, 1853. The F.A.E. theme, derived from Joachim's typically romantic personal motto, pervades the other movements, but is absent in its literal form from the Scherzo. Its general contour and, in one place, its pitches are clearly audible in the Scherzo's second strain, however, and there is another reference to it in the retransition from the very brief Trio to the repetition of the Scherzo. The overall shape of the piece is a conventional ABA, and a brief coda in the tonic major key refers to the theme of the Trio.

Sonata in G major, Op. 78

JOHANNES BRAHMS

Vivace ma non troppo
Adagio - Più andante - Adagio
Allegro molto moderato

DAVID ZAFER, violin; PATRICIA PARR, piano

The G major Sonata is the earliest of Brahms' published duos for piano and violin, but is actually his second work for the medium. It was completed a full quarter century after the youthful Scherzo and published in 1880. The nickname "Rain Sonata" is occasionally appended to it because the third movement's principal theme is borrowed from two songs in the composer's earlier song cycle op. 59 (1873). Its initial rhythmic motive links it to the first theme of the first movement as well, and is thus an element in the Sonata's cyclic unity. The first movement is full of typically Brahmsian rhythmic subtleties, and here the violin takes the lead, initiating all of the themes in the movement's exposition. The second movement neatly combines the

functions of a slow middle movement with the ternary intermezzo form which frequently fulfills the scherzo function in Brahms' four movement cycles. Here the piano takes the lead, both in the Adagio and the Andante sections, as well as in the coda, which refers to the material of the Andante, but in the key and tempo of the Adagio. The finale is set in the tonic minor, but begins tantalizingly with an extended dominant pedal. A large chunk of the Adagio, in its own key of Eb major, is set in the middle of the development section, and the return to the tonic major in G is reserved for the coda. There we hear yet another reference to the Adagio music and the cyclic "rain" motive.

INTERMISSION

Rastlose Liebe (D. 138)
Du bist die Ruh (D. 776)
Gretchen am Spinnrade (D. 118)

FRANZ SCHUBERT

Immer leiser, Op. 105, no. 2
Von ewiger Liebe, Op. 43, no. 1

JOHANNES BRAHMS

PATRICIA KERN, mezzo-soprano, GRETA KRAUS, piano

Our group of Schubert Lieder presents two early settings based on Goethe and one relatively late one of a poem by Friedrich Rückert. "Rastlose Liebe" was composed in 1815 and published in 1821 as the first of Schubert's five Gedichte von Goethe, Op. 5. Though the sixteenth-note figure in the right hand of the piano part provides an element of continuity, the song is through-composed and appropriately "breathless" as it rushes from start to finish. "Du bist die Ruh" was composed in 1823 and published as the third of Vier Gedichte von Rückert und Graf Platen, op. 59 in 1826. The first four of the poem's five strophes are grouped into two pairs, each set to the same music. The final strophe is set to a striking and dramatic variant of this same musical paragraph, which is repeated for further rhetorical emphasis. "Gretchen am Spinnrade" was composed in 1814 and published as op. 2 in 1821. While it is not absolutely necessary to know why Gretchen's "heart is heavy" or that it is Faust whom she wishes to "hold and kiss", it does illuminate the composer's setting with its fusion of naive, folk-song-inspired melody in the refrain, and dramatic, almost operatic declamation in the verses.

Brahms is also represented by one late and one relatively early song. The five songs of op. 105 were composed in 1886 and published in 1889. "Immer leiser" consists of two long strophes which are set to parallel, but by no means identical sections of music. The repetition is obscured by the fact that the voice sets in three measures later the second time through. A modulation to the relative major at the end of the first section is balanced by approximately the same music in the tonic major at the end of the song. "Von ewiger Liebe" is a dialogue between two lovers. The first part sets the scene, and introduces the boy's speech. Each of these elements has a distinctive melodic setting, but the whole is unified by metre and tonality, and rounded off by a coda. The girl's speech is introduced more simply, but coincides with a change of tempo (slower), metre (3/4 to 6/8) and mode (minor to major). Her melody, while interestingly like that of the boy, is nevertheless distinctive. The switch to the major mode for the girl's reply to the boy's rather hesitant petition means that what began in darkness in the lowest register ends affirmatively in a higher register.

Variations on an original Theme in
Ab major, Op. 35 (D. 813)

FRANZ SCHUBERT

PATRICIA PARR, GRETA KRAUS, piano

Schubert's theme and eight variations were composed in 1824 and published a year later. The theme is in the usual binary form and is perfectly symmetrical. There is a move to the mediant (C minor) at the double bar, and what should be a reprise coinciding with the return of the tonic in the second half only begins that way, but quickly diverges. Primarily "figural" variations alternate with primarily melodic, even contrapuntal ones. Variations one and two are of the former type, and three, the latter in a slower tempo. Four and five are alternately figural and melodic, and six is figural while at the same time using a simplified version of the melody. Seven is slower again, and its stricter part writing recalls three. Its second half is extended, and pauses on the dominant, preparing variation eight, the "finale", which sets in without recalling or even strongly suggesting the melody of the original theme. It is twice the length of the other variations, providing an opportunity for an appropriately high-spirited coda.

Notes by Robert Falck